

Target Setting

According to the Partnership's enabling statute, our leaders are responsible for setting targets and milestones (or interim targets, also referred to as 'benchmarks' within the statute) for making Puget Sound healthy by 2020. Accordingly, we are also responsible for selecting indicators of our ecosystem's health. As a result, in focusing on establishing a process for target setting we have two sorts of targets to consider:

1. Targets and milestones for our **project planning** work in establishing the Action Agenda, assessing our performance related to our Action Agenda accomplishments, and updating the Action Agenda, and
2. Targets for our **ecosystem indicators and threat reduction indicators** work as part of our associated performance management efforts

Although we have routinely set targets and milestones for our Action Agenda work (with the goal of accomplishing the highest priority near term actions), we have not established a process for setting targets for ecosystem indicators and threat reduction indicators. As a result, a new ecosystem indicators-focused target setting process is hereby established.

Definitions

First let's differentiate the terms 'goal,' 'target' and 'estimate'

Goal – A condition or state that the organization is striving to achieve. Goals are usually focused on long-term future accomplishments, and may be stated in terms beyond what we might reasonably expect to achieve. Such well intentioned, but potentially unachievable goals are commonly known as aspirational goals.

Target – A target is the organization's intended, future performance results for a program, service or set of intended actions. If current performance is not currently capable of regularly meeting or exceeding an intended, future target state, there is an implication that the organization is planning to change or improve some performance condition significantly to cause the organization's performance to improve sufficiently to meet or exceed that target performance level.

Estimate – Also known as a projection, an estimate is a best guess of the organization's performance level at some stated future date based on current and past data. Estimates take into account the direction the available data is currently trending and the amount of normal variation present in the performance results observed in the past.

Target Setting for Ecosystem Indicators and Threat Reduction Indicators

1. Indicator Champions are assigned to work with the Partnership's Performance Management leaders to oversee the collection, cleansing and analysis of the performance results data related to their associated indicators and the other key performance measures within their families of indicators.
2. Indicator Champions, Partnership staff, Science Panel members and other key social and scientific leaders regularly participate in the ongoing Open Standards work sessions to build and improve the results chains over time that are associated with the select, highest priority ecosystem indicators involved so as to best understand the relationships between our identified, highest priority:
 - a) Near Term Actions,
 - b) Output results achieved,
 - c) Threat Reduction performance, and
 - d) ultimate Ecosystem Indicator outcome accomplishments.
3. Based on what we learn from our collaborative work in Open Standards, Partnership staff recommend ecosystem indicators and other key performance measures, including Threat Reduction Indicators for target setting to the Science Panel based on the following indicator/ key performance measurement criteria:
 - a) Indicators, performance measures and associated data are aligned with Partnership's strategic priorities,
 - b) Results data is available and has been documented for a sufficient amount of time from which to project future performance,
 - c) Associated data flows from a stable and generally reliable data collection process or set of processes, and
 - d) Indicators, performance measures and their associated data are part of an integrated social and scientific system designed to understand and improve the health of Puget Sound.
4. There is no minimum or maximum number of targets that will need to be set for Ecosystem Indicators and Threat Reduction Indicators. Instead, the Science Director, Performance Manager and other key Partnership staff and the Science Panel are to work collaboratively over time to gradually send forward for approval by the Leadership Council performance targets that both can feasibly be met and that will have a reasonable potential to successfully be achieved by the target dates set.
5. The Science Panel advises the Leadership Council concerning the range of performance possible (expected during that timeframe) for those select indicators and key performance measures going forward to the Leadership Council for approval.
6. The Leadership Council selectively sets performance targets as they see fit based on said advice from the Science Panel, Partnership staff and considering other leadership issues that the Leadership Council believes may be important to our collective success.